

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- Sub B 1*
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1. Apparatus for producing asphaltene pellets comprising:
 - a) flow means that supplies hot asphaltene through a conduit to its outlet; and
 - b) pellet producing medium that breaks up the liquid stream of said hot asphaltene exiting the outlet of said conduit and produces pellets of asphaltene.

2. Apparatus according to claim 1 including:
 - a) a reservoir or container that collects said pellets of asphaltene together with some fluid producing a slurry; and
 - b) transporting means that transports said slurry to the required location.

2 ~~3. Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said fluid is liquid water.~~

- abc B 1* *2*
4. Apparatus according to claim 3 wherein said transporting means includes a conduit that supplies the slurry to the required location.

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5. Apparatus according to claim 4 including a pump for pumping the slurry to said location.

- B 2*
6. Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said pellet producing medium is liquid water.

- Sub B 2*
7. A method for producing asphaltene pellets comprising the steps of:

- a) supplying hot asphaltene through a conduit to its outlet; and
- b) breaking up the liquid stream of said hot asphaltene exiting the outlet of said conduit using a pellet producing medium to produce pellets of asphaltene.

8. A method according to claim 7 further comprising the steps of:

- a) collecting said pellets of asphaltene in a reservoir together with some fluid producing a slurry; and
- b) transporting said slurry to a required location.

Sub A^{B3} 9. A method according to claim 8 wherein the step of collecting said pellets of asphaltene in a reservoir together with some fluid producing a slurry is carried out by collecting said pellets of asphaltene in a reservoir together with some liquid water producing a heavy hydrocarbon or asphaltene - water slurry.

10. A method according to claim 7 wherein said step of breaking up the liquid stream of said hot asphaltene flowing out of the outlet of said conduit using a pellet producing medium so that pellets of asphaltene are produced is carried out by spraying a fluid so that the fluid contacts the asphaltene exiting said outlet of the conduit and pellets of asphaltene are produced.

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9 11. A method according to claim 9 wherein the step of transporting said slurry to a required location is carried out by supplying said slurry via a conduit to a required location.

Sub C^{B3} 12. A method according to claim 9 including pumping the slurry to said location.

Sub A^{B4} 13. A method according to claim 10 wherein the step of spraying a fluid so that the fluid contacts the asphaltene exiting said outlet of the conduit and pellets of asphaltene are produced is carried out by spraying liquid water.

14. A method according to claim 8 including grinding said asphaltene pellets and transporting the grinded asphaltene pellets to a location.